

Appl. No. 09/328,667

Attorney Docket No.: 113394

**CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for communication employing a plurality of gatekeepers, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first request for information at a first gatekeeper, said first request being received from a subscriber terminal without said first request having been sent through any other gatekeeper,

sending to the subscriber terminal the information requested in the first request,

receiving a second request for information at ~~a~~ the first gatekeeper;

determining whether the information requested in the second request is known by the first gatekeeper;

sending the second request via at least one intermediate gatekeeper to a second gatekeeper if the information requested in the second request is not known by the first gatekeeper;

receiving the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request from the second gatekeeper via the at least one intermediate gatekeeper wherein a hierarchical level associated with said first gatekeeper is different from a hierarchical level associated with said intermediate gatekeeper; and

sending the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request to a third gatekeeper wherein the first gatekeeper and the third gatekeeper are of a same hierarchical level and located in a same domain and wherein said second request was received from said third gatekeeper without said second request having been sent through any other gatekeeper.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing the ~~received~~ information requested in the second request in at least one of the first, intermediate and second gatekeepers.

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3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said sending the second request includes the ~~steps~~step of:

determining a next gatekeeper in a gatekeeper-level path to the ~~requested~~  
information requested in the second request.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the information requested in the second request includes an application address.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the information requested in the second request includes resource information.

6. Canceled.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

attempting to connect to a called entity using the information contained in the information received in response to the second request.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

determining whether a hop-count field has been set to zero; and  
if the hop-count field has been set to zero, dropping the ~~received~~ information  
received in response to the second request.

9. (Original) The method of claim 3, where the first gatekeeper is an inter-zone gatekeeper.

10. (Original) The method of claim 3, where the first gatekeeper is an inter-domain gatekeeper.

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11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for communication, the apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a memory coupled to said processor, said memory storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor for performing the steps of:

receiving a first request for information at a first gatekeeper, said first request being received from a subscriber terminal without said first request having been sent through any other gatekeeper,

sending to the subscriber terminal the information requested in the first request,

receiving a second request for information at ~~a~~ the first gatekeeper;

determining whether the information requested in the second request is known by the first gatekeeper;

sending the second request via ~~an~~ at least one intermediate gatekeeper to a second gatekeeper if the information requested in the second request is not known by the first gatekeeper;

receiving the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request from the second gatekeeper via the at least one intermediate gatekeeper wherein a hierarchical level associated with said first gatekeeper is different from a hierarchical level associated with said at least one intermediate gatekeeper; and

sending the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request to a third gatekeeper wherein the first gatekeeper and the third gatekeeper are of a same hierarchical level and located in a same domain and wherein said second request was received from said third gatekeeper without said second request having been sent through any other gatekeeper.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the instructions further perform the step of:

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storing the ~~received~~ information requested in the second request in at least one of the gatekeepers.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein sending the second request includes the step of determining a next gatekeeper in the gatekeeper-level path to the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the information requested in the second request includes an application address.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the information requested in the second request includes resource information.

16. Canceled.

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 12, said memory storing further instructions adapted to be run on said processor, said further instructions comprising:

attempting to connect to a called entity using the information contained in the information received in response to the second request.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, said memory storing further instructions adapted to be run on said processor, said further instructions comprising:

determining whether a hop-count field has been set to zero; and

if the hop-count field has been set to zero, dropping the ~~received~~ information received in response to the second request.

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19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, where the first gatekeeper is an inter-zone gatekeeper.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13, where the first gatekeeper is an inter-domain gatekeeper.

21. (Currently Amended) A medium for communications, the communication using a plurality of gatekeepers at different hierarchical levels, said medium storing instructions adapted to be executed by a processor for performing the steps of:

receiving a first request for information at a first gatekeeper, said first request being received from a subscriber terminal without said first request having been sent through any other gatekeeper,

sending to the subscriber terminal the information requested in the first request,

receiving a second request for information at ~~a~~the first gatekeeper;

determining whether the information requested in the second request is known by the first gatekeeper;

sending the second request via an at least one intermediate gatekeeper to a second gatekeeper if the information requested in the second request is not known by the first gatekeeper;

receiving the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request from the second gatekeeper via the at least one intermediate gatekeeper wherein the first gatekeeper and the at least one intermediate gatekeeper are at different hierarchical levels; and

sending the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request to a third gatekeeper wherein the first gatekeeper and the third gatekeeper are of a same hierarchical level and located in a same domain and wherein the second request was received from the third gatekeeper without said second request having been sent through any other gatekeeper.

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22. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 21, wherein the instructions further perform the step of:

storing the ~~received~~ information requested in the second request in one of the gatekeepers.

23. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 21, wherein said sending the second request includes the ~~steps~~ step of:

determining a next gatekeeper in the gatekeeper-level path to the ~~requested~~ information requested in the second request.

24. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 21, wherein the information requested in the second request includes an application address.

25. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 21, wherein the information requested in the second request includes resource information.

26. Canceled.

27. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 22, storing further information adapted to be executed by a processor, the further information comprising:  
attempting to connect to a called entity using the information ~~contained in the~~ information received in response to the second request.

28. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 23, storing further information adapted to be executed by a processor, the further information comprising:  
determining whether a hop-count field has been set to zero; and  
if the hop-count field has been set to zero, dropping the ~~received~~ information received in response to the second request.

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29. (Original) The medium of claim 23, where the first gatekeeper is an inter-zone gatekeeper.

30. (Original) The medium of claim 23, where the first gatekeeper is an inter-domain gatekeeper.